

Auckland Regional Public Health Service

Rātonga Hauora ā Iwi o Tamaki Makaurau



Working with the people of Auckland, Counties Manukau and Waitemata

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Media update

Friday, 17 October 2008

Cause of gastroenteritis outbreak confirmed as Norovirus

Auckland Regional Public Health Service (ARPHS) can confirm that test results show Norovirus is the cause of a recent outbreak of gastroenteritis in the hospital section of a retirement home in Auckland.

ARPHS Clinical Director, Dr Julia Peters confirmed today that from the onset of the outbreak precautionary measures were taken, and Norovirus guidelines were strictly followed at the retirement home.

We are working closely with the staff and they are to be commended for their prompt actions in following advice and implementing control measures. We are closely monitoring the situation and providing advice and support.

Most cases appear to be improving and while two potential new cases have been notified this is not unusual during the course of an outbreak. Symptoms are usually mild but can be severe in vulnerable and elderly people. Symptoms are usually last from 12 to 72 hours, but some people may be unwell for longer. In some instances infected people have no symptoms.

Dr Peters said it was important that those with relatives and friends at the retirement home follow the advice from management during the outbreak.

Norovirus is a common cause of gastroenteritis. It is easily spread when people eat food or drink fluids contaminated with the virus. Proper hand hygiene (thorough washing + drying) is critical to prevent further spread.

For the facts about Norovirus go to: <http://www.arphs.govt.nz/notifiable/downloads/Norovirus1.pdf>

Ends

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